

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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TOSEC 319, ZFF PARIS ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: KALB, CBS, FIRST LINE REPORT EX BRUSSEL, THURS A.M.

FOR BREMER FROM S/PRS

LONDON FOR AMB MCCLOSKEY FROM S/PRS

PRESIDENT NIXON GAMBLES ON THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS, HIS EYE
MUCH MORE ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPEACHMENT THAN THE
STRUGGLE AGAINST MIRV.

PRESIDENT NIXON HAS RETURNED TO US, THE SUMMIT NOW A MATTER
OF HISTORY. ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF US-SOV AGREEMENTS WERE
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SIGNED, THE AGREEMENT THAT WOULD HAVE MADE A MAJOR DIFFER-
ENCE WAS NOT: THE AGREEMENT IN FACT OR IN PRINCIPLE TO PUT
A CEILING ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF MIRVS.

THAT WOULD HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE BECAUSE BOTH SUPERPOWERS ARE NOW ON VERGE OF A NEW CYCLE IN THE ARMS RACE. AN AGREEMENT ON MIRVS WOULD HAVE BEEN HAILED AS A SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT, A BREAK ON A COSTLY SPIRALING-UP OF ARMS, MISSILES, BUDGETS AND THE LIKE. BUT THERE WAS NO SUCH AGREEMENT FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS.

FIRST, THERE WAS NO UNIFIED AMERICAN POSITION. THE PENTAGON AND DEFSEC SCHLESINGER HAULING IN ONE DIRECTION, THE SEC-

STATE IN ANOTHER, AND THE PRESIDENT ABOVE BOTH BUT UNWILLING TO RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM.

THERE WAS WATERGATE TOO: THE PRESIDENT UNABLE TO MAKE ANY DRAMATIC MOVES TOWARDS THE MIRV AGREEMENT BECAUSE TO HAVE MADE SUCH MOVES WOULD HAVE INVITED CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION ON CAPITAL HILL, AND MR. NIXON IN HIS DRIVE TO HEAD OFF IMPEACHMENT COULD NOT AFFORD TO ALIENATE THE RIGHT, THE BASE STILL OF HIS POLITICAL SUPPORT.

THERE WAS AS WELL THE DESIRE TO PULL OFF A DIPLOMATIC COUP SIMILAR TO THOSE HE HAD AT EARLIER SUMMITS. THERE WAS NO COUP POSSIBLE OTHER THAN MIRVS, HOWEVER, MAKING THE THIRD SOV-AM SUMMIT LESS SPECTACULAR THEN THE FIRST TWO. BOXED IN BY IMPEACHMENT ON THE RIGHT, THE PRESIDENT WAS OBVIOUSLY TEMPTED TO REACH FOR THE STARS. BUT HE RESISTED. HE OPTED FOR THE LESSER OF THE TWO EVILS. HE STOPPED FAR SHORT OF ANY KIND OF MIRV OR MISSILE DEAL WHILE DRAWING S MUCH PUBLICITY AS HE COULD OUT OF THE SIMPLE FACT OF SUMMITRY. HE WAS READY TO SUFFER THE SLINGS OF DISAPPOINTED AMERICANS SO LONG AS HE DID NOT MAKE A DEAL THAT COULD JEOPARDIZE HIS IMPEACHMENT PROSPECTS, WHICH APPEAR TO BE RISING A BIT AFTER HIS RECENT BOUT OF FOREIGN TRAVEL.

SO TO WHATEVER DEGREE IMPEACHMENT OR WATERGATE HAVE INTRUDED INTO FOREIGN POLICY, PERHAPS IT WAS INEVITABLE. AS SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS STATED MANY TIMES, NO COUNTRY UNCLASSIFIED

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CAN GO THROUGH SUCH A HUGE INTERNAL UPHEAVAL WITHOUT PAYING A MAJOR PRICE.

THERE IS AN IRONY HERE: NOT ONLY IS THE US PAYING A PRICE, RUSSIA IS TOO. SOV PARTY CHIEF BREZHNEV OBVIOUSLY WANTED MORE THAN HE GOT OUT OF THIS SUMMIT, BUT COULD NOT PUT THE PRESIDENT IN THE POSITION OF GIVING MORE THAN THE AMERICAN TRAFFIC COULD BEAR.

MOREOVER, ACCORDING TO SOVIET SOURCES, BREZHNEV COULD NOT

MAKE A MAJOR DEAL WITH THE PRESIDENT WHOSE GRIP ON HIS JOB IS STILL A MATTER OF DISPUTE. STRATEGIC ARMS IS TOO IMPORTANT TO BE NEGOTIATED WITH A SHORT-TIMER, THE RUSSIANS SAY, A SHORT-TIMER WHO APPEARS TO BE SO PREOCCUPIED WITH HIS LEGAL DEFENSE THAT HE HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO RECONCILE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIS TWO PRINCIPAL ADVISERS.

THE RUSSIANS TALKED CONSTANTLY ABOUT WATERGATE, AND SO TOO DO THE AMERICANS. AND FOR BOTH IT WAS AN INTRUSION INTO THE LEGITIMATE BUSINESS OF DIPLOMACY. FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER, A BIG INTERNAL BATTLE NOW EMERGES BEFORE HE

CAN PRODUCE AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL ON MIRVS, PERHAPS IN ANOTHER TWO MONTHS. SISCO

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